

Dr. Owen House
Church St. between West & Main Sts.
New Harmony, Indiana.

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HABS No. 24-4

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
CENTRAL UNIT—ST. LOUIS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Herbert W. Foltz, District Officer
1033 Architects & Builders Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.

DR. DAVID DALE OWEN HOUSE
NEW HARMONY, INDIANA

HABS 24-4

This building was erected in 1859 by Dr. David Dale Owen, to house the accumulated geological and other specimens gathered during his services as the United States Geologist, and for his work in chemistry.

Dr. David Dale Owen was the son of Robert Owen, the founder of New Harmony, who purchased the Community from the Rappites in 1824.

His brothers were Robert Dale Owen, author of national repute and former Minister to Naples, and Colonel Richard Owen, Commandant of Camp Morton in 1862.

The building is now occupied by Mr. H.P. Owen, grandson of the builder.

(Signed) Carl C. Warweg
Squad Leader

(Approved) Herbert A. Foltz
DISTRICT OFFICER

April 20, 1934

Indianapolis Sunday Star

A HOOSIER LISTENING POST

BY KATE MILNER RABB
April 22, 1934



O ME, one of the most interesting houses in New Harmony is the David Dale Owen house sometimes known as the laboratory. Its curious ornaments—the carved fossils, the interesting windows, the circular room—indeed everything about it is beautiful and attractive. And yet many visitors to New Harmony miss it altogether. Miss Louise M. Husband, writing of it recently, tells of some of its historic pieces of furniture.

“For more than thirty years the headquarters of the United States Geological Survey was in New Harmony and David Dale Owen was the first United States geologist,” says Miss Husband. “This collection, which was the largest at that time in the United States, was housed in the old fort until 1839, when the laboratory was built.

“In 1837, Mr. Owen was made state geologist and made the first survey under the authority of the national government. In 1839, he made surveys of Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois. In 1847 he surveyed Missouri and from 1854-57 he was state geologist of Kentucky. From 1859 until his death in 1869 he was again our state geologist. Think of having accomplished all that and but fifty-three years of age when death claimed him. He was also an artist and scientist of ability.

“After his death, the laboratory was made into a residence and quite naturally makes a unique one. David Dale's daughter, Mrs. Nina Owen Parke, lived here for a while and it was here that her daughter, Mrs. Caroline Snedeker was born. H. P. and E. F. Owen, sons of Richard Owen, lived here the greater part of their lives and in this house R. D. Owen was born. He with his sister, Mrs. Aline Owen Neal, now occupy the home. It is filled with a great number of old and interesting things and much of the town's social life has taken place beneath its roof. Its tower wrought iron work, chimney pots, glass ceiling and quaint architecture, make it stand out conspicuously among many other types in New Harmony. David Dale Owen was buried in the Say tomb but later his remains were removed to Maple Hill.

“On the walls of the living room hang the Gousche pictures which represent the signs of the zodiac, in all their beauty of color and design. Much of the furniture was the property of Joseph Neef, head of the

Owen-Machure School and the first Pestalozzian teacher in America. Mrs. David Dale Owen, before her marriage was Caroline Neef. The secretary was brought on the back of a donkey across the Alps from Switzerland, former home of the Neefs. There is also a Sheraton chair, a table and sofa.

“Joseph Neef accomplished what is said to have been a feat never before accomplished—he learned the English language and wrote a book all in one year. The tall handsome vases on the piano were brought from Italy by Robert Dale Owen, who was minister to Naples, and are underglazed china, rare at that period. The silver pitcher, presented to him by the women of Indiana for the bill giving them a right to hold property which he introduced in the state Legislature, is here.

“The sewing table, which belonged to Mrs. Robert Dale Owen, has its place along with a beautiful handmade day bed made by Mrs. R. D. Owen's grandfather, Peter Duclos, who came from France and was a pupil in the community school.

“In the hall hang some colored steel engravings of rural scenes which are lovely. The house now belongs to Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Owen's son Kenneth, who is following in the geological footsteps of his ancestors. It is truly a wonderful home, and one in which one would love to have been born.”

Among the many famous men from this and other countries who visited the laboratory were Audubon, who at the time was living at Henderson, Ky., not far away, and Sir Charles Lyell, the eminent Scottish geologist, who, it will be remembered, visited New Albany's celebrated physician on the same tour. Looking through George Lockwood's book on New Harmony I notice that he quotes Sir Charles Lyell's notes on his visit, and that the great Scotchman was particularly impressed by the happy child life of New Harmony.

“We were charmed to meet with many children, happy and merry, yet perfectly obedient; and once more to see what, after the experience of the last two or three months, struck us as a singular phenomenon in the new world—a shy child.”

RECALLS SOMETHING.

Boston Herald.

Samuel Untermyer calls the NRA a noble experiment, and that sounds pretty courageous to us, considering what happened to the last one.